

ELECTRICAL PLUG CONTACTS AND A SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCT FOR THE PRODUCTION

THEREOF

Docket No. 14261

Page 2 of 8

CLAIMS AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the coating has a thickness of at least 0.3 µm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver.
2. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the coating has a thickness of maximally 10 µm.
3. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the coating has a thickness of maximally 5 µm.
4. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the coating has a thickness of 0.5 µm to 4 µm.
5. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of at least 0.2 percent by weight.
6. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of at least 0.5 percent by weight.
7. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of maximally 50 percent by weight.

ELECTRICAL PLUG CONTACTS AND A SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCT FOR THE PRODUCTION

THEREOF

Docket No. 14261

Page 3 of 8

8. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of maximally 30 percent by weight.
9. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of maximally 15 percent by weight.
10. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the addition comprises one or more substances taken from the group of the following substances: Tungsten, molybdenum, graphite, nickel, cobalt and metal oxides, especially tin oxide and zinc oxide, as well as tungsten carbide and molybdenum carbide.
11. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the coating is deposited by a PVD process, especially by sputtering.
12. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein at a material from the following group is selected as material for the main body:
 - (a) CuNiSi(X): Materials designated C7025, C7026 according to CDA, for example;
 - (b) CuFeP: Materials designated C194, C19210 according to CDA, for example;
 - (c) CuSn: Materials designated C521, C511, C14415, according to CDA, for example;
 - (d) CuZn: Materials designated C272, C230, C260 according to CDA, for example;
 - (e) CuCrSiTi(X): Materials designated C18070, C18080, C18090 according to CDA, for example;
 - (f) CuNiSn: Materials designated C72500, C19025 according to CDA, for example;
 - (g) CuSnZn: Materials designated C663, C425 according to CDA, for example;
 - (h) CuNiZn: Materials designated C75700, C77000, C76400 according to CDA, for example;

ELECTRICAL PLUG CONTACTS AND A SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCT FOR THE PRODUCTION

THEREOF

Docket No. 14261

Page 4 of 8

- (i) CuBe: Materials designated C17100, C17410, C17200 according to CDA, for example;
- (j) CuTi: Materials from the family of materials designated C19900 according to CDA, for example,
- (k) Stainless steel: Materials designated
 - 1.4310 according to DIN 17224,
 - 1.4311 according to DIN 17440,
 - 1.4406 according to DIN 17440,
 - 1.4428 according to DIN 17443,
 - 1.4429 according to DIN 17440,
 - 1.4568 according to DIN 17224,
 - 1.4841 according to DIN 17224,
 - 1.4318, 1.1231, 1.1248, 1.1269, 1.1274, 1.5029 according to DIN V 17006-100.

13. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the product is a strip.

14. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in Claim 13, **characterized in that** wherein the strip is pre-punched.

15. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein at the coating consists of silver with a tungsten or molybdenum content of 4 to 6 % by volume, and is applied in a thickness of 0.5 µm to 5 µm.

16. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein a diffusion-inhibiting intermediate layer is provided between the main body and the contact-making coating.

17. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in Claim 16, **characterized in that** wherein the intermediate layer consists of silver or nickel.

18. (Currently Amended) The semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, **characterized in that** wherein the concentration of the addition in the silver or silver-alloy coating is lower at the surface of the coating than in the deeper region of the coating.

ELECTRICAL PLUG CONTACTS AND A SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCT FOR THE PRODUCTION

THEREOF

Docket No. 14261

Page 5 of 8

19. (Currently Amended) Plug-in contacts for electric plug-in connectors made from a semi-finished product according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ Claim 1.
20. (Original) The use of plug-in contacts as defined in Claim 19 in electric power systems of automobiles, which are operated at a nominal voltage at which arcing may occur, especially in 42 Volt DC power systems.
21. (Currently Amended) Method for making a semi-finished product as defined in ~~any of Claims~~ claim 1 to 18 by PVD coating of a strip, consisting of a non-precious metallic material, with silver or a silver-based alloy with an addition, which has a higher melting point than silver and which does not form an alloy, or at best a separation alloy, with the silver or the silver-based alloy.
22. (Currently Amended) The method as defined in Claim 21, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein coating is effected by sputtering.
23. (Currently Amended) The method as defined in Claim 21, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the components of the coating are deposited simultaneous or in a fashion overlapping in time.
24. (Currently Amended) The method as defined in Claim 23, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein ratio of the separation rates of the components of the coating is altered during the separation process.
25. (Currently Amended) The method as defined in Claim 24, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the ratio between the separation rate of the addition and the separation rate of the silver or the silver alloy is reduced toward the end of the separation process.